

SEVERE WEATHER SUMMARY

NORTH CENTRAL, NORTH EAST and EAST CENTRAL KANSAS

National Weather Service - Topeka, KS

A significant tornado outbreak and unprecedented local flooding highlighted the weather hazards during the spring and summer months. The season started off slow, peaked in early May and then reemerged in August and early September. No deaths were reported, but tornadoes caused 9 injuries and nearly \$10 million damage.



The first severe weather warnings and reports of the season came on March 12 when large hail fell in a swath from Westmoreland to Eudora. By mid to late April, severe storms became more common with hail and damaging winds over generally east central Kansas. The first tornadoes of the year occurred on April 24 when 3 brief touchdowns in Franklin and Osage counties caused only minor damage.

May became the most active severe weather month of the year with most events taking place between the 4th and the 10th. On May 6th, severe storms produced numerous reports of large hail, to a diameter of 2.25 inches at Quenemo, and damaging winds, to 70 mph in Dickinson county.

The major event was May 8th when a dozen tornadoes ripped across much of the area with the largest, an F3, tracking 25 miles across rural Osage county. The most destructive hit southwest Lawrence causing 6 injuries, while another wide long tracked tornado moved through southeast Anderson county between Colony and Kincaid producing 3 injuries. These three tornadoes produced an estimated \$9.2 million in property damage; the most since 1990. The severe storms of May 8th also produced many reports of damaging winds, and a report of 4 inch diameter hail near Washington.

In June, the main severe weather event occurred on the 22nd over Republic county of north central Kansas where a stationary severe storm produced 6 tornadoes and widespread record setting flooding. The tornadoes damaged about 15 buildings, but rainfall of over 12 inches in only a few hours washed out roads, stranded people and animals, flooded fields and homes and caused widespread long-lasting problems. Damage in Republic county was estimated around \$4 million.



Although hot and dry weather prevailed during the summer, July produced spotty severe weather in the form of large hail and strong damaging winds. Three inch diameter hail in the Ottawa area on July 11th produced over \$1 million damage to roofs, windshields and cars, while winds to 75 mph on the 31st brought down large limbs in Garnett. In August, several days saw active thunderstorms producing large hail and damaging winds. On the 30th, heavy rains of 3 to 7 inches fell across parts of east central Kansas. Particularly hard hit was southwest Lyon county where the rain occurred in only a few hours, and pushed creeks and streams out of their banks..

Localized heavy rains produced flash flooding in mid September across Cloud and Ottawa counties of north central Kansas, and in early October in northern Riley county. The excessive rainfall in general affected roads, highways and low water crossings. Following these isolated events, the busy 2003 severe weather season finally came to a close across north central, north east and east central Kansas.